

## PART IV

## The Pattern of Agriculture

Farms: Number and Size:

Farming in Lincoln County is on units of large and medium size. There were 1,051 properties classified as farms by the Census of Agriculture in 1954. In that year, 520 farms or almost half of all farms in the county, contained over 1,000 acres. The average size of farms in 1954 was 1,447 acres placing the county second highest in the state in average farm size. There has been a steady increase in farm size during the county's history. Increased use of machinery and consolidation of land into cash grain farms through lease and purchase has caused the trend toward large farms.

The number of farms reached a peak of 2,139 in 1910. Since 1910 the number has continually decreased, reaching a low of 1,151 farms in 1954. Acreage in farms has risen greatly over the years and in 1954 stood at 1,520,926 acres. More state and railroad grant land has been leased or purchased by farmers. Lincoln County ranks second in the state in the total amount of land in farms according to the Census of 1954.

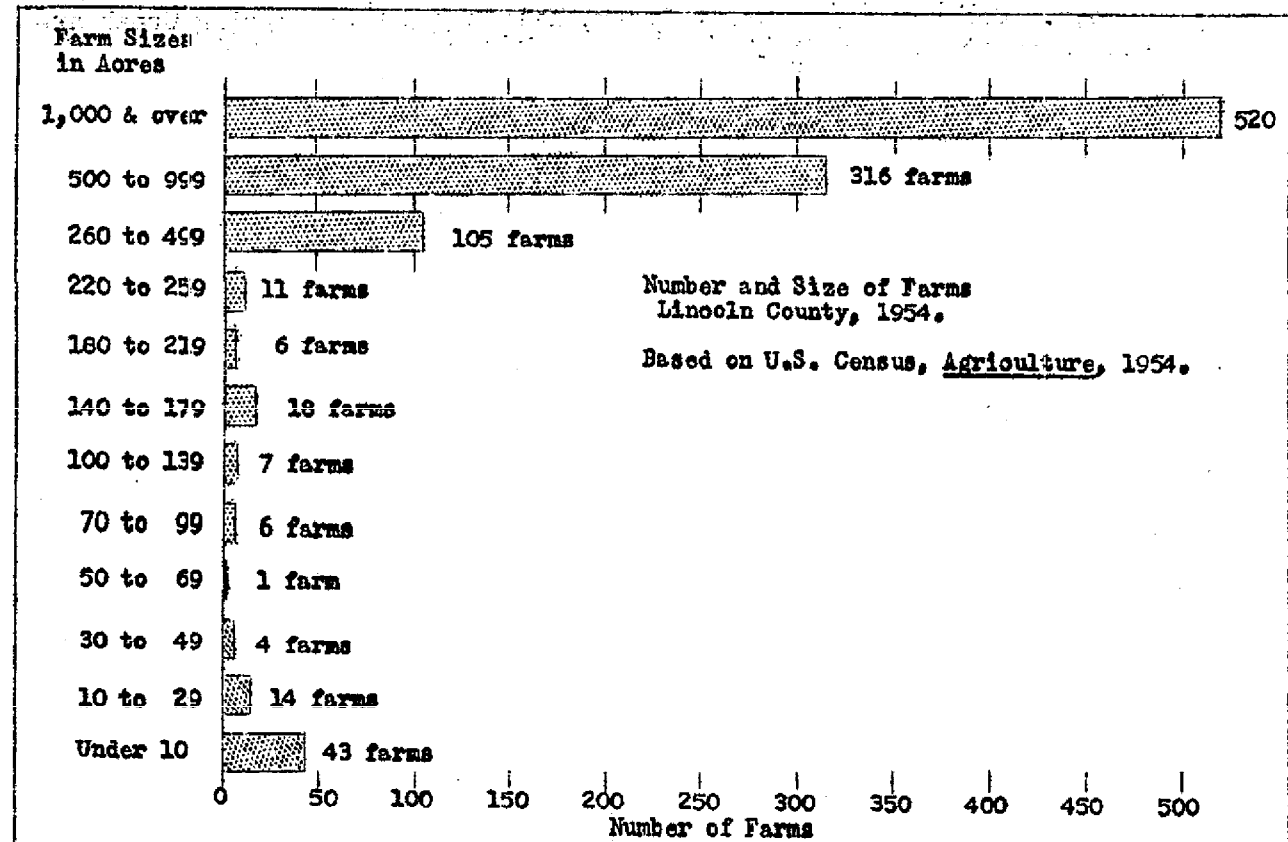


Figure 7.-- Number and Size of Lincoln County Farms, 1954.

Large Farms

Large, extensive farms are characteristic of Lincoln County. There were 307 farms exceeding 1,000 acres in size and 27 others with 5,000 acres or more, according to the Census of 1954. These large units represent almost half the number of farms in the county. They contained a total of 1,228,800 acres, or about four-fifths of all the farm land in the county. The most common use of land on the large holdings as a group is for dryland pasture. A total of 518,502 acres was pastured during 1954. Harvested cropland, mainly wheat, is the most important land use on the farms under 5,000 acres. On the farms with 5,000 or more acres the second largest land use was harvested cropland, mainly wheat and barley. Fallow or idle land was the next most important with 294,444 acres. Woodland pastured accounted for 84,252 acres. Cropland used only for pasture totaled another 9,695 acres.

Table 9.- Large Farms: Number and General Land Use  
Lincoln County, 1954

Land Utilization on Large Farms	Farms 1,000 to 4,999 acres	Farms 5,000 acres and over
Number of farms-----	492 farms	28 farms
Land in farms-----	906,648 acres	322,176 acres
Cropland harvested-----	283,302 acres	24,470 acres
Cropland used only for pasture	8,915 acres	786 acres
Cropland not harvested and not pastured (idle, fallow land)	274,139 acres	20,305 acres
Woodland pastured-----	60,325 acres	23,927 acres
Woodland not pastured-----	6,327 acres	200 acres
Other pasture (not cropland and not woodland)-----	267,269 acres	251,233 acres

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Table 10.- Farms, Number and Average Size, Land in Farms  
Lincoln County, 1900-1954

Census Year	Total Farms in the County	Total County area in farms (acres)	Average size of farms in the county (acres)	Percent of County area in farms
1900	1,911	903,997	473	61.4
1910	2,139	1,209,910	565	82.2
1920	1,860	1,329,405	715	90.3
1925	1,595	1,238,757	777	84.1
1930	1,497	1,356,446	906	92.1
1940	1,269	1,317,436	1,038	89.5
1945	1,187	1,453,821	1,225	98.8
1950	1,167	1,424,564	1,335	96.7
1954	1,060	1,520,726	1,447	99.8

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Types of Farms

The predominant type of operation in Lincoln County is the cash-grain farm. There were 883 farms, or over four-fifths of the total in this classification in 1954. Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry were second in importance with 68. Next in number were miscellaneous farms with 66 reported. The remainder of the farms were divided between poultry (20), general (14), and dairy (9) with most of the general being primarily crop and livestock.

Table 11.- Types of Farms, Lincoln County, 1954

Type of Farms	Number of Farms	Percent of all farms in the county
Total farms in county.....	1,060	
Field-crop farms.....	883	83.4
Cash-grain.....	883	
Other field-crop.....	0	
Vegetable farms.....	0	
Fruit-and-nut farms.....	0	
Dairy farms.....	9	.8
Poultry farms.....	20	1.9
Livestock farms other than dairy and poultry	68	6.4
General farms.....	14	
Primarily crop.....	2	.2
Primarily livestock.....	0	
Crop and livestock.....	12	1.1
Miscellaneous and unclassified farms.....	66	6.2

Source: U.S. Census, AgricultureFarm Value

Value of farm land and buildings has increased greatly since 1940. The value per acre has risen about three times and value per farm has increased five times since 1940. This reflects the large increase in average size of farm.

Table 12.- Value of Farm Property  
Lincoln County, 1900-1954

Year	Total Value All Farm Property in County	County Average Values	
		Per Farm (dollars)	Per Acre (dollars)
1900	\$ 11,238,178	\$ 5,880	\$12
1910	42,153,274	19,707	20
1920	74,572,547	35,832	50
1930	37,614,414	24,726	27
1940	33,897,094	26,712	26
1950	93,824,511	87,933	60
1954	132,960,959	126,509	91

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

An average farm was valued at \$127,000 in 1955, compared to \$27,000 in 1940. Farm values in the county reached a high in 1920 and this was not surpassed until the post World War II period. In the last 15 years value has been added by the general rise in land prices, farm improvements and additions of farm acreage, machinery and buildings.

### Farm Ownership and Tenure

Most farms in Lincoln County are operated by part-owners and tenants. The Census of 1954 showed that only about one-fifth were operated by full owners. This varies from the state average in which 75 percent of all farms are operated by full owners. Less than one-third were being run by part-owners as compared to over two-fifths today. Although it was higher in the depression years, about one-third of Lincoln County farms have been operated by tenants over the years. In earlier years there were several units operated by managers, but more recent Census reports show decline to only one manager-operated farm. The agriculture of the area lends itself to tenant farming and part ownership. These systems are becoming more important today with the high initial cost of entering agriculture.

Table 13.-- Farm Tenancy, Number and Percent of Farms  
By Tenure of Operator, Lincoln County  
1925-1954

Year	Number Farms in County	Full Owners		Part Owners		Managers		Tenants	
		number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms	number of farms	percent of all farms
1925	1,595	576	36.1	443	27.8	18	.6	558	35.0
1930	1,497	439	29.3	457	30.5	15	1.0	586	39.1
1935	1,447	407	28.1	415	28.7	5	.3	620	42.8
1940	1,269	380	29.9	478	37.7	2	.2	409	32.2
1945	1,187	333	28.0	467	39.3	5	.4	382	32.2
1950	1,066	250	23.4	474	44.5	1	.09	342	32.1
1954	1,060	239	22.8	454	43.2	1	.09	357	34.0

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

### Farmland Utilization

Typical of east central Washington, dryland range pasture is the leading type of land use in Lincoln County. About two-fifths of the land in farms is dryland range pasture. Harvested cropland in 1954 totaled 28 percent of the land in farms. Idle cropland and cultivated summer fallow to accumulate and conserve soil moisture for grain growing comprised slightly over one-fourth of the county's farm land. Woodland use is small, accounting for only 7 percent of the farm land. Pastured cropland is minor, accounting for less than 1 percent of the land in farms. Other land which includes house lots, roads and wasteland accounted for slightly less with 12,700 acres.

### Farm Residence and Operation

In contrast to most other Washington counties, very little part-time farming is carried on in Lincoln County. Over three-fourths of the farmers

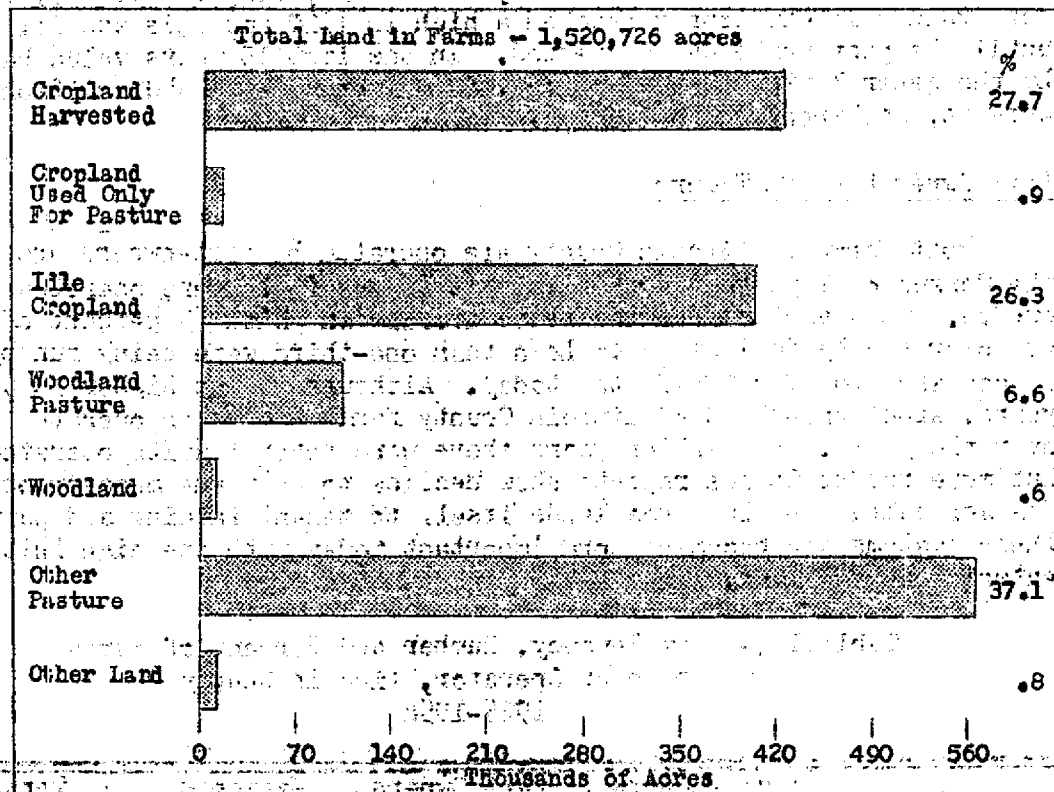


Figure 8.- Utilization of Farmland in Lincoln County, 1954

are on a full-time commercial basis. Slightly under one-tenth of the county's farmers, or 100 operators, worked off the farm more than 100 days in industrial or commercial trades. There were 96 farmers (9 percent of the total) that earned more from off-farm employment than they did from the sales of products from their lands. Most of the farm work in the county is seasonal. This leaves a period in fall, winter, and early spring during which farmers are idle and available for some off-farm employment. Only one-tenth of all Lincoln County farmers lived away from the farms they operated in 1954. Since 1950 there has been an increase in the number of operators residing off their farms in a nearby city or town.

#### Farm Facilities

Most of the farms in Lincoln County were above the state average in the use of facilities that save labor and make rural life easier. Farmers in this county enjoy an extensive rural electric service. In 1954 a total of 98 percent of farm homes and buildings were equipped with electricity; eighty-seven percent reported telephones. Statewide averages for these facilities were 97 percent and 74 percent, respectively. The county is located close enough to Spokane to receive good television reception. A larger than average number of rural homes, over three-fifths of them, have television sets. Most of the farms also have piped running water and almost seven-tenths of them have refrigerators in the form of home freezers.

Lincoln County agriculture is well-mechanized for wheat and other field crops. Nearly all the farms are equipped with tractors, trucks and automobiles.

There were 1,100 grain combines on 850 farms in the Census of 1954, ranking second in the state in use of combines. In degree of mechanization, the county ranked fifteenth in the number of farms with field forage harvesters and ninth in pick-up hay balers. Items such as milking machines and electric pig brooders have become more common on livestock and dairy farms.

Table 14.- Specified Facilities and Equipment on Farms  
Lincoln County, 1954

Facility or Equipment Item	Number of Farms Using	Percent of All Farms in County Equipped
Telephone.....	913	86.9
Electricity.....	1,030	98.0
Television set.....	676	64.3
Piped running water.....	1,013	96.4
Home freezer.....	727	69.2
Electric pig brooder.....	39	3.7
Power feed grinder.....	215	20.5
Milking machine.....	62	5.9
Grain combines.....	852	81.1
Corn pickers.....	2	.2
Pick-up balers.....	178	16.9
Field forage harvesters.....	39	3.7
Artificial ponds, reservoirs and earth tanks.....	133	12.7
Motortrucks.....	1,015	96.6
Tractors.....	1,003	95.4
Automobiles.....	994	94.6

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

### Irrigation and Facilities

An increasing number of farms have been adding irrigation facilities to improve yields of hay, grain and pasture. The number of farms with irrigation increased almost three times between 1949 and 1954, and in 1954 there were 85 farms with 4,159 acres of irrigated land. Most of the irrigated land is harvested cropland. Hay is the principal crop harvested from irrigated land, 2,379 acres being irrigated in 1954. With irrigation it is possible to get three good cuttings in place of one when there is no water applied. Yield of dryland pastures has been improved with sprinkler irrigation. Most irrigation systems in this area use sprinklers, and dry water from wells, farm tanks and reservoirs.

Table 15.- Irrigated Farms: Number and Acreage  
Lincoln County, 1950 and 1954

Item	1950	1954
Number of irrigated farms.....	31	85
Land irrigated.....	1,696 acres	4,159 acres
Irrigated land in farms according to use:		
Farms irrigating crops.....	27	73
Farms irrigating pasture.....	8	27
Acres of crops irrigated.....	1,377	3,480
Acres of pasture irrigated.....	319	679

Source: U.S. Census, Agriculture

Table 16.- Lincoln County's Rank Compared With  
Other Washington Counties

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity	Year
<u>General</u>			
Land area.....	8	1,472,000 acres	1954
Number of farms.....	23	1,051 farms	1954
Land in farms--percent.....	1	103.3 percent	1954
Average size of farms.....	2	1,447 acres	1954
Cropland harvested.....	2	421,514 acres	1954
Rural farm population.....	22	4,117 persons	1950
Total county population.....	30	11,100 persons	1955
<u>Cash farm income</u>			
Value of all farm products sold...	3	28,716,300 dollars	1954
Value of livestock sold.....	21	2,398,318 dollars	1954
Value of crops sold.....	4	26,274,742 dollars	1954
<u>Livestock on farms</u>			
All cattle and calves.....	11	41,700	1954
Milk cows.....	27	1,730 head	1954
Hogs.....	16	2,286 head	1954
Chickens.....	22	44,701 birds	1954
Horses and mules.....	9	1,308 head	1954
Sheep and lambs.....	10	6,512 head	1954
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>			
Value of dairy products sold.....	29	160,599 dollars	1954
Whole milk sold.....	30	2,565,000 pounds	1954
Value of poultry products sold...	27	109,803 dollars	1954
Chickens sold.....	30	17,406 birds	1954
Eggs sold.....	23	234,122 dozen	1954
<u>Important crops harvested</u>			
Wheat.....	2	316,200 acres	1954
Barley.....	2	76,000 acres	1954
Alfalfa.....	8	11,000 acres	1954

Sources: U.S. Census, Agriculture  
U.S. Census, Population  
Washington State Census Board  
U.S.D.A., Agricultural Estimates Divn.